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A LEPROSY-LIKE DISEASE IN THE LUNGS OF A MEXICAN PARROT

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A parrot, called by the dealers "Mexican Red Head," died a month after inoculation with scarlet fever blood. It appeared to be normal throughout except that the lungs contained many scattered grayish tubercle-like nodules about 0.5 to 1 mm. in diameter. Smears stained by the tubercle method showed numerous acid-fast bacilli which resembled the tubercle or lepra bacillus. Many of these, however, were short or even coccoid.

Sections showed that these tubercles were largely peribronchial (Fig. 1). They were composed of epithelioid cells with vesicular nuclei (Fig. 2). Some cells contained two nuclei. In the sections stained with hematoxylin and erythrosin the new growths appeared to be purely epithelial of epithelioid proliferations without any changes in the surrounding tissues and without leukocytic infiltration; nor did they show any connective tissue stroma or capsule. However, the surrounding tissues were greatly congested and in places there was extensive hemorrhage.

In sections stained with carbol fuchsin, decolorized with 2% hydrochloric acid in 95% alcohol, and then stained with Unna's polychrome methylene blue, the epithelioid cells were seen to be filled with acid-fast bacilli lying at all angles. Now the picture was very much like that of human or rat leprosy (Figs. 3 and 4).

Many, but not all, of the growths contained so many black, amorphous particles, like carbon, that the cellular structure and the bacilli could be seen with difficulty. Some of the unpigmented, as well as the pigmented tumors were near a bronchus.

Before the tissue was cut it was thought that the lesions were those of avian tuberculosis. Cultures on rabbit-blood agar and glycerol potato were kept under aerobic, partial tension and anaerobic conditions at 37 C. and 24 C. for six months. There was no growth.

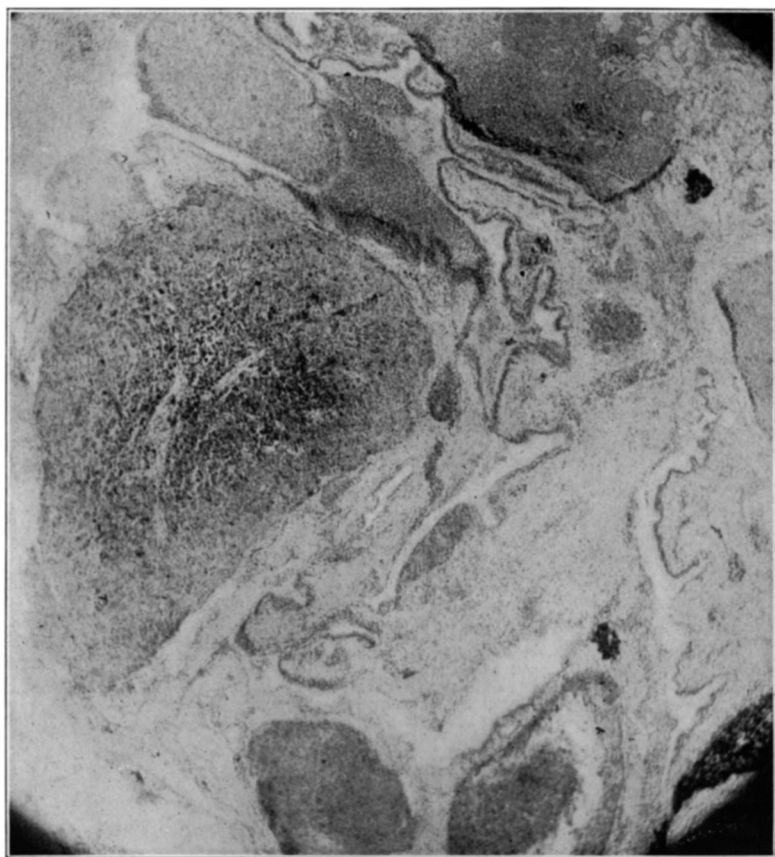


Fig. 1.—Leprosy-like disease in a parrot.

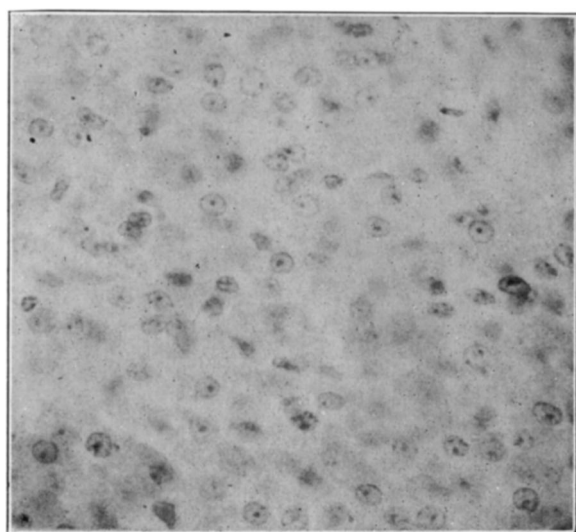


Fig. 2.—Leprosy-like disease in a parrot.

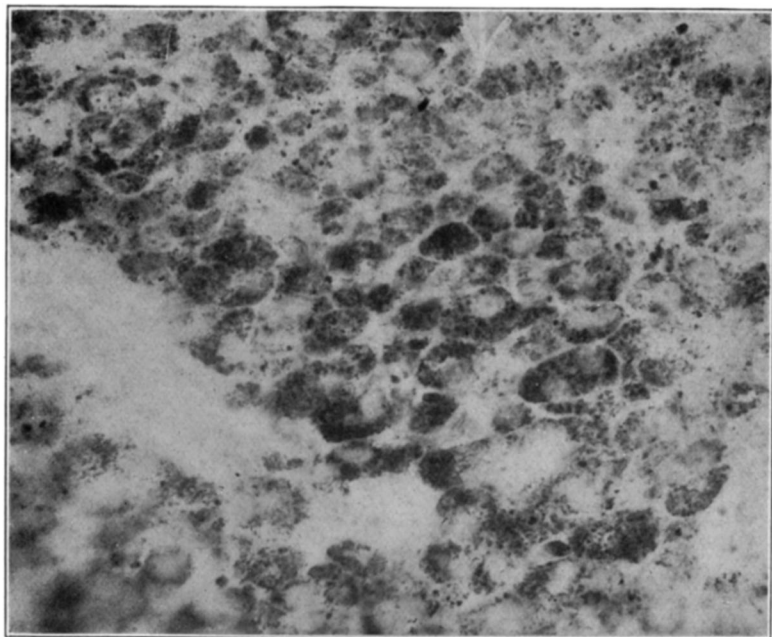


Fig. 3.—Leprosy-like disease in a parrot.

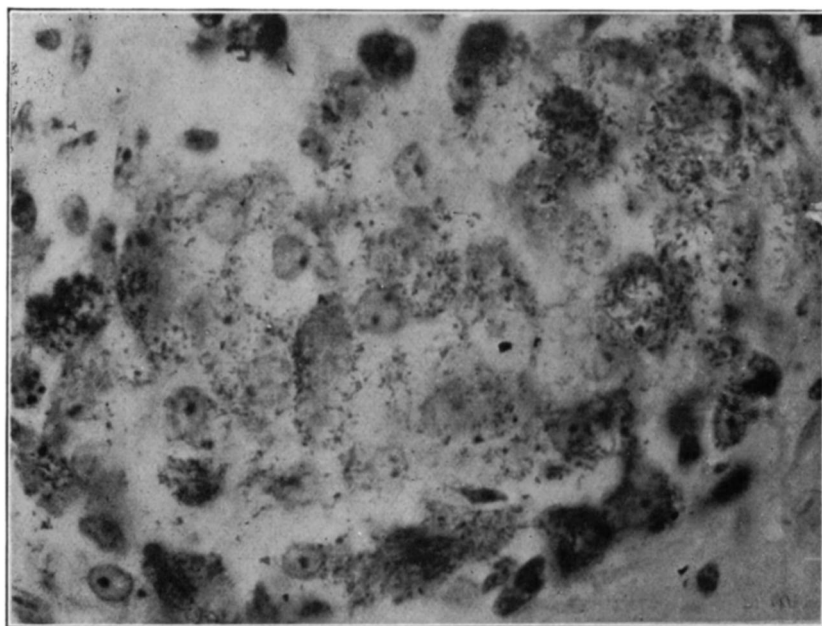


Fig. 4.—Leprosy-like disease in a parrot.